

# Portland, Eugene satellite offices open

By Ron Karten

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In Eugene on Saturday, April 30, Tribal members Perri McDaniel, Becky Weston and a group of other Eugene-area Tribal leaders took a landmark step in reintroducing the local office to some 200 Tribal members and Elders served in the area.

The Tribal office at 711 Country Club Road, Suite 1A, was packed with visitors and guests.

"I've seen it grow," said Tribal member Dee Edwards, referring to activity in the Eugene satellite office. She has been taking Lifeways classes since the office actually reopened earlier in the month.

The celebration succeeded with the help of many Tribal members who are working to put the office on a friendlier, more useful footing in the community.

McDaniel is the new coordinator of the office and Weston is her assistant.

Lifeways classes have put a concrete face on the many existing benefits for Tribal members, including health care, housing and social services that don't always result in face-to-face contact among Tribal members.

Kevin Simmons, Dan Stroebel, Andy Jenness, Dell Dickinson, Marta Clifford, Albert Jeffers and Edwards, all members of the Tribe, have been working for months with McDaniel to resuscitate the dormant office.

Showing the depth of support in the Eugene area, McDaniel sent out a thank you e-mail with the names of dozens of participants and volunteers.

The effort also brings a newly named and conceived office, "Eugene Gathering Place," on line, literally as well as figuratively, for area Tribal members.



Photo by Michelle Alaimo

**Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy talks with Congressman Earl Blumenauer after the ceremony for the opening of the Tribe's Portland office at its new location at 4445 S.W. Barbur Blvd. on Friday, May 6. To see more photos of the Portland office grand opening, visit the Tribe's Facebook page.**

Courtesy of Weston, the "Eugene Gathering Place" has a Facebook page and e-mail address (gatheringeugene@yahoo.com), and Jenness is working on a Twitter feed as well.

"It's good to learn the culture," said Edwards, "but the socializing may be even better."

"There is a need down here for a place to be Indian," said Tribal Council Secretary Kathleen Tom.

"The biggest thing is building the sense of community," said Jenness.

Tom was joined by Tribal Council Vice Chair Reyn Leno and Tribal

Council members Chris Mercier, Steve Bobb Sr., Jack Giffen Jr. and Wink Soderberg in attending the office's re-opening.

"It's great to come down and see a lot of people down here just visiting," said Bobb. "It's not like a council meeting. It's a completely different atmosphere."

## Portland office grand opening

On Friday, May 6, the Tribe celebrated the grand opening of the Portland office at the new location at 4445 S.W. Barbur Blvd.

"We want to be a grateful, humble people," said Tribal Chairwoman Cheryle A. Kennedy in her welcome. She emphasized the Tribal intent of honoring partnerships and welcomed partners of all shapes and sizes in that regard.

"I called our Public Affairs group and asked, 'Did you invite the people from next door?'" she said.

The Tribe purchased the new 20,000-square-foot building in November 2009 and Tribal employees moved in in February 2010.

From Portland Congressman Earl Blumenauer to the Royal Rosarians, more than 50 dignitaries were among almost 200 who attended the festivities to get a first look at the Tribe's new offices.

"This is a great visible symbol of the Tribe's Restoration," said Blumenauer. He said that he is work-

ing with a variety of interests to create a plan that will clean up the Willamette River, among the sacred fishing grounds revered by the Grand Ronde Tribe and their predecessors for millennia.

"Our people have lived and walked this land for literally thousands of years," said Kennedy. "Today's roadways are built on trails that our ancestors walked."

"I think it's just spectacular," said Karen Quigley, executive director of the Legislative Commission on Indian Services, "to see the Grand Ronde Tribe back home in Portland and growing, and showing a presence that will benefit the entire Portland area."

The event featured Tribal member and Portland office Vocational Rehabilitation Specialist Jon George as master of ceremonies.

"We've been waiting a year for this," he said as the Tribal flag went up along with the U.S. and Oregon flags in front of the Tribal offices.

Tribal member Ann Lewis, Commercial Real Estate manager with the Tribal Lands Department who landed this property that became the Portland office, called this, "a huge step forward for us as a Tribe."

In encouraging this and other real estate purchases, she said, "Tribal Council recognizes that we are a progressive Tribe and that we are here to stay."

Tribal member Eric Bernando, who teaches Chinuk Wawa language classes at the Portland office, called the new office building the "Portland Embassy," he said, "because we're a nation."

Joining Kennedy at the event were Tribal Council Vice Chair Reyn Leno, Tribal Council Secretary Kathleen Tom and Tribal Council members Wink Soderberg, Chris Mercier, Jack Giffen Jr. and Steve Bobb Sr.

Chris Tinney (Lower Eastern Cherokee), and Tribal members T.J. Grefsrud and Levi Leibelt served as Honor Guard for the flag raising.

Grand Ronde Canoe Family members Bobby Mercier, Brian Krehbiel, Greg Leno, Kyle Towner (Siletz) and Marcus Gibbons sang the Honor Song.

Grand Ronde Royalty included Junior Miss Makenzie Aaron, Little Miss Iyana Holmes, Princesses Madison Aaron and Amelia Mooney. Amelia's twin sister, Amaryssa Mooney, also participated. They carried the flags for the flag raising, sang The Lord's Prayer and passed out gifts.

"I'm a great believer in purpose," said Kennedy. "We can choose to make this a better place." ■



Photo by Ron Karten

**Tribal member and Eugene Office coordinator Perri McDaniel cuts the celebratory cake during the Eugene satellite office re-opening on Saturday, April 30. Behind her, from left, are Kathy Soderberg, wife of Tribal Council member Wink Soderberg, Tribal Elder Violet Folden and Tribal Council Secretary Kathleen Tom. To see more photos of the Eugene office re-opening, visit the Tribe's Facebook page.**